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DE RUEHLM #0469/01 1181149  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 281149Z APR 09 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9882  
INFO RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1136  
RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 0219  
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3785  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1612  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8606  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 6842  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4928  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2970  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 4889  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3995  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 9245  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 6555  
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO 1096  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3468  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RHMFIUU/CDRUSARPAC FT SHAFTER HI//APCW/APOP//  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J3/J332/J52//

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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA (BOUCHER), SCA/INS AND PRM  
STATE ALSO PASS USAID  
AID/W FOR ANE/SCA, DCHA/FFP (DWORKEN, KSHEIN)  
AID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA (MORRISP, ACONVERY, RTHAYER, RKERR)  
ATHENS FOR PCARTER  
BANGKOK FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA (WBERGER)  
KATHMANDU FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA AND POL (SBERRY)  
GENEVA FOR RMA (NKYLOH, NHILGERT, MPITOTTI)  
USUN NEW YORK FOR ECOSOC (D MERCADO)  
SECDEF FOR OSD - POLICY  
PACOM ALSO FOR J-5

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CE](#)  
SUBJECT: Northern Sri Lanka SitRep 62

REF: A) Colombo 464 B) Colombo 459 C) Colombo 456 D) Colombo 454 E)  
Colombo 448 F) Colombo 435 G) Colombo 432 H) Colombo 425 I) Colombo  
418 J) Colombo 414 K) Colombo 413 and previous

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY: On April 27, the Government announced it would end use of heavy weapons in the conflict zone given the threat to civilians. However, according to several still unconfirmed reports, shelling into the "safe zone" continued on April 28. The Government did not approve UN Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes' requests for UN access to the conflict zone, nor to the release of UN local workers residing in IDP camps. 40MT of food for trapped civilians was delivered on April 28. End summary.

END TO COMBAT?  
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12. (SBU) While the Government of Sri Lanka declared an end of combat operations on April 27, unconfirmed reports of shelling in the Government-declared "safe zone" continued today, April 28. Two sources in the conflict zone e-mailed photographs purportedly dated April 28 at 10 a.m. and labeled as Mullivaikkal and Iraddaivaikkal, areas within the "safe zone." Several photographs of explosions on land were taken from a vantage point offshore. Post is seeking confirmation of the reports of shelling from other sources with contacts in the conflict area.

## HOLMES LEAVES "DISAPPOINTED"

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13. (SBU) UN Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes left Sri Lanka on April 27 with few concrete gains. The Sri Lankan government did not approve his requests for UN access to the conflict area and for the release of UN local staff workers from IDP camps. He was publicly skeptical of the Government's vow to end heavy combat operations, given similar promises in recent months. He told reporters, "I hope that the idea of not using heavy weapons will genuinely be respected, which I am afraid has not been the case in the past." Holmes announced during his visit that the UN would provide an additional \$10M to support IDP assistance.

## UK, FRENCH, JAPANESE DELEGATIONS

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14. (SBU) British Minister for International Development Mike Foster visited Sri Lanka on April 27. British Deputy High Commissioner told Charge that Foster pressed the Government for a pause in fighting to allow humanitarian assistance into the safe zone. He urged international monitoring of IDP screening centers, greater access to IDP transit sites, and greater freedom of movement by IDPs, as well as early returns of IDPs to their home villages. The day before the visit, Prime Minister Brown announced 2.5 million pounds in new humanitarian assistance for Sri Lanka, some of which may be used for demining.

15. (SBU) During their April 29 visit, British Foreign Secretary David Miliband and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner will meet with the President, government officials, opposition leaders, and the UN and will visit IDP transit sites in Vavuniya. A

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five-member Parliamentary delegation headed by Des Browne scheduled for April 30-May 2 has been postponed to May 4-6 at the request of the Government.

16. (SBU) This requested delay may be because of a visit by Japanese Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi. The Japanese Embassy told us today that Akashi plans to come to Sri Lanka from April 30-May 3. Akashi is also seeking access to IDP camps.

## CONDITIONS IN IDP SITES

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17. (SBU) The rush of civilians who fled the safe zone since April 20 clearly overburdened Government registration capabilities. Efforts to provide food to civilians pending registration in the interim at Omanthai, where only UNHCR and ICRC have regular access, are ad-hoc.

Post has received a report from a medical worker in the Vavuniya area that on April 27 buses started taking all boys ages 14 - 35 from two schools in Vavuniya used as transit facilities en route to the longer-term camps. The youths were told they were being taken under the Prevention of Terrorism Act to a police station for screening. However, the young men have reportedly not turned up at any police station, and their current location is unknown. Post plans to follow up with ICRC to determine if it is aware of the reports, if the ICRC considers this to be an appropriate screening approach, and whether ICRC protection officers have access for monitoring to the facilities where the youths have been taken.

## ADDITIONAL AID

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18. (U) On April 27, UNHCR airlifted nearly 3,000 family-sized tents from the UNHCR warehouse in Dubai to Colombo for distribution to civilians displaced in northern Sri Lanka. UNICEF also announced the arrival of a 50MT airlift to Colombo of nutritional supplies, water treatment units for safe water, oral rehydration salts, and medical supplies, and noted another shipment is due to arrive shortly. The Government of India pledged 1 Billion Indian Rupees (approximately \$20M) for relief and rehabilitation for displaced Tamil civilians.

## FOOD DELIVERED TO CONFLICT ZONE

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¶9. (SBU) Due to security concerns and offloading and storage limitations, a ship transporting 1,030 metric tons (MTs) of World Food Programme (WFP)-donated food was diverted from Mullaitivu to Jaffna. To respond to the immediate need for food in the conflict area, WFP is sending small shipments with the ICRC-flagged ferry, Green Ocean. On April 28, the Green Ocean transported the first shipment of food to the conflict area since April 1. The shipment included 40 MTs of rice (34), lentils (4), sugar (1), and oil (1). (Note: based on UN low-end estimates of 50,000 persons still within the LTTE-controlled pocket, 27 MTs would be needed each day.) Once offloading is completed and patients are evacuated, the ICRC ferry will continue the following rotation: every second trip, the ferry will transport 30 to 40 MTs of complementary food provided by the non-governmental organization ZOA. Because ICRC offloads patients

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in Pulmoddai, WFP is staging food shipments in Pulmoddai for transportation to the conflict area.

## ESTIMATES OF CIVILIAN DISPLACEMENT

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¶10. (SBU) OCHA reports an increase of 40,000 IDPs to the Government-designated IDP camps in recent days. This brings the total number of documented arrivals into Government-controlled territory since late October to 151,231. These civilians are located in Vavuniya, Jaffna, Mannar and Trincomalee. However, this figure probably does not include approximately 30,000 of IDPs still en route to transit facilities, according to Defense Ministry announcements regarding rescued civilians. On April 27, John Holmes cited a possible total of 200,000. The UN estimates that at least 50,000 people are still trapped in the conflict zone. Estimates provided by sources inside the safe zone range as high as 165,000, but these may be under pressure from the LTTE to over-report the numbers.

MOORE